

CHAPTER XIII

MACAULAY'S CHARACTER OF MARY

MACAULAY draws Mary's character very favourably and very fairly. He appreciated the difficulties she had to face when her husband and her father were the leaders of opposing parties, shows a keen insight into her actions and sentiments both as a sovereign and as a woman, and displays more sympathy towards her than for most of his characters.

The least satisfactory part of Macaulay's account of Mary is that which deals with her career before the Revolution. To begin with he is wrong about the motives which led Charles II to consent to her marriage. 'Charles sometimes from levity and indolence, suffered Danby to take steps which Lewis resented as mortal injuries. The King was brought to consent to a marriage between the Lady Mary, eldest daughter and presumptive heiress of the Duke of York, and William of Orange, the deadly enemy of France and the hereditary champion of the Reformation/ '

On the contrary, the marriage was deliberately arranged by Charles for political purposes. 'I judge this marriage', he told the French ambassador,

to be very advantageous to my interests. ... It will put a stop to the suspicions cherished by my subjects that the connection I keep up with France is based on a change of religion---Since the Duke of York declared himself a Catholic all England is alarmed and has come to

apprehend that I

¹1, 214 (ii).
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